

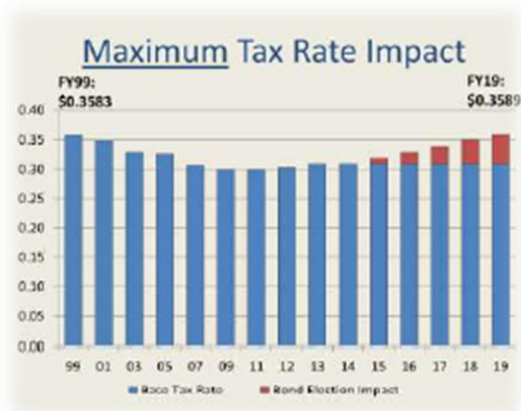


Citizens' Bond Committee Report

Background

In January 2013, the Sugar Land City Council authorized a resolution for a bond election in the November 2013 election in an amount not to exceed \$50 million for four new park projects. The lack of progress on park projects coupled with the need for a reliable funding source to adequately fund new park projects prompted the City to call for the bond election. Because these new projects would have an impact on the tax rate, it was deemed that the projects should be approved by the voters. The City's current tax rate structure can support existing parks, streets, drainage, and utilities. However, new structures and facilities would create new operations and maintenance obligations that are not currently included within the current tax rate structure.

The City's sound fiscal management has earned it an AAA Bond rating from Standard & Poor's. This allows the City to finance the proposed projects at a very competitive rate. To finance the projects, there would be a one cent impact to the tax rate per year. This would be implemented over a period of five years, making the maximum impact to the tax rate five cents at an approximate rate of \$25 per year over a five-year period. The tax impact would cover the operations and maintenance costs as well as debt repayment. The cumulative annual tax impact of all the 2013 proposed General Obligation bond projects would total \$128 for the average



home value. Even with a five cent increase to the tax rate, Sugar Land would still have the third lowest tax rate among 63 cities within its population range. A five cent tax increase would place the City back at the original tax rate of \$0.3583 that was present at the time of the City’s last bond election in 1999.

A bond election is the most plausible solution to allow the City to be entrepreneurial and opportunistic in funding these new projects. The investment in new parks, public spaces, and recreational facilities will improve the quality of life in Sugar Land and make the City a more attractive destination for residents, businesses, and visitors. The projects included in this bond election are park development along the Brazos River, a network of hike and bike trails, a festival site to accommodate large-scale events, and a community park that would include multi-use recreational facilities.

Citizens’ Bond Committee

A month later, on February 16th, 2013, the Sugar Land City Council approved a resolution that appointed a citizens’ bond committee to advise the City on the prioritizing of the parks for the City’s upcoming bond election. The City allowed residents who wanted to take part in creating the bond election propositions to submit an application displaying interest in serving as part of the citizen’s bond committee. The Mayor and City Council appointed Dr. Betty Baitland and Mr. Jarvis Hollingsworth to serve as co-chairs of the



Executive Committee. Eight additional Executive Committee members were appointed to oversee the four parks projects. There were 91 citizens appointed to the four project committees. In total, 101 citizens served to provide input on the upcoming bond election. The committee was expected to be thoughtful, develop projects that were in the best interest of the most people, and to provide input and recommendations for the bond package. With over 920 hours volunteered, the Citizens' Bond Committee successfully met their charge. They carefully reviewed, toured, and studied the components of each of the four projects using the community input provided over years of public meetings, surveys, and forums. The following is the recommended allocation for each project.

Community Park	\$16,802,490
Brazos River Park	\$13,379,200
Hike & Bike Trails	\$9,213,765
Festival Site	\$5,929,200
Issuance/Escalation	<u>\$4,672,715</u>
TOTAL	\$49,997,370



Project 1: Community Park

One proposed project is for the creation of a community park in the western area of Sugar Land. The community park went through an extensive “public process” with various stakeholder meetings, a public meeting, and a communitywide survey. The feedback provided through the



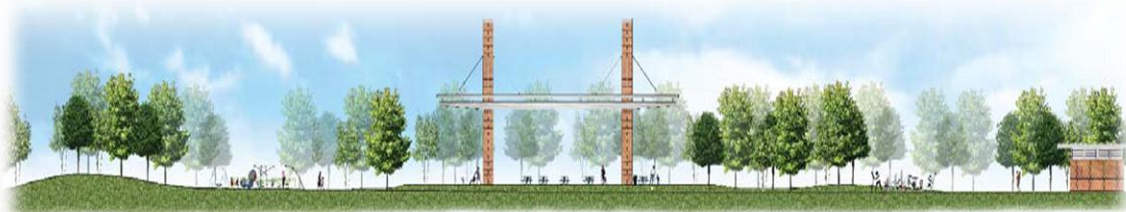
public confirmed the 2005 Parks Recreation and Open Space Master Plan recommendations for requested outdoor activity needs. The Parks Master Plan shows the need for a community park on the

west side of Sugar Land. Community parks are already located in north Sugar Land with Imperial, Eldridge and City Parks. In the east, Oyster Creek and Lost Creek Park meet the community’s needs and in the southeast, First Colony Athletic Park serves as a community park. This park addresses the absence of adult sports activities in Sugar Land, but also provides facilities for youth and family activities.



The recommended \$16,802,491 would allow for the creation of trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, a pavilion, and various sports fields. In addition to a tennis center, residents would have access to sports fields to partake in activities such as cricket, soccer, lacrosse, rugby, and flag football.

More passive amenities would include a labyrinth and bocce courts. Residents communicated a need for public tennis courts as the majority of courts in Sugar Land are owned by Home Owners Associations and schools. There would be 12 tennis courts for league play and public use. These courts could also be used for tournaments. As a part of the long range planning and in accordance with the hike and bike trail master plan, the trails in this park would connect to the City's hike and bike trail system. There would also be a large pavilion for rental and public use as well as a playground area. The park would also include a community park building with restrooms, locker rooms, and administration offices. The plan calls for 290 parking lot spaces to accommodate the park. An existing historical cemetery on the site would be improved with new fencing and informational graphics documenting its historical significance. The educational signs would share the history about the prison system while the cemetery was active. A new fence and trail on the perimeter of the cemetery would allow the entire community to view a part of Sugar Land's history creating a balance between the community's needs and the community's history.

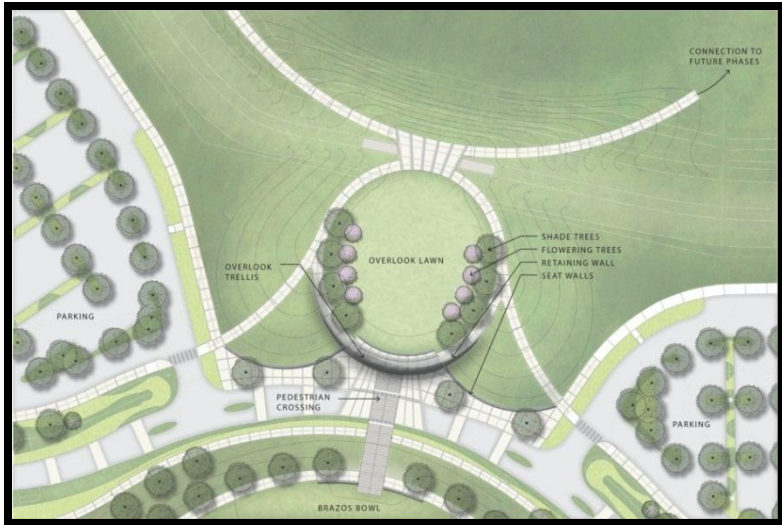


Project 2: Brazos River Park Phase II



Another proposed project is parkland development along Brazos River. The original master plan for the Brazos River Park was created in 1997 and consists of 9.3 river miles and 3,600 acres in the floodway. The goal of the Brazos River Park Phase II project addresses the Parks and Recreation Open Space Master Plan to ensure that people of all interests, age groups, and abilities have access to the recreational, cultural, and leisure facilities of their choice. A citizen's survey showed the desire of citizens to preserve existing open spaces and natural areas which could be used for picnicking, large group gatherings, field games, or for passive, non-structured recreation activities. The development of nature trails and fishing piers in natural areas would provide a unique recreation opportunity for Sugar Land residents. Preserving the natural areas would help maintain riparian habitats, reduce the danger of flooding, and protect the natural environment. The development of the Brazos River Park phase II would cost \$13,379,200. There would also be the creation of a multi-purpose lake. This multi-purpose lake would be used for canoeing, kayaking, dragon boat races, and fishing. It could also be used for

the swimming portion of triathlons. Amenities included at the lake would be a boathouse, pier, shelters, restrooms, and pavilions. There would be a series of connecting hike and bike trails between both phases of the Brazos River Park and the future festival site.



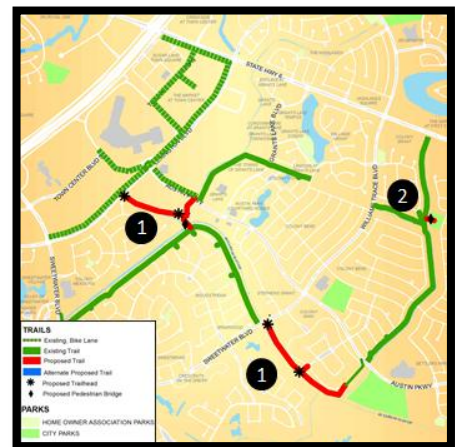
Project 3: Hike & Bike Trails



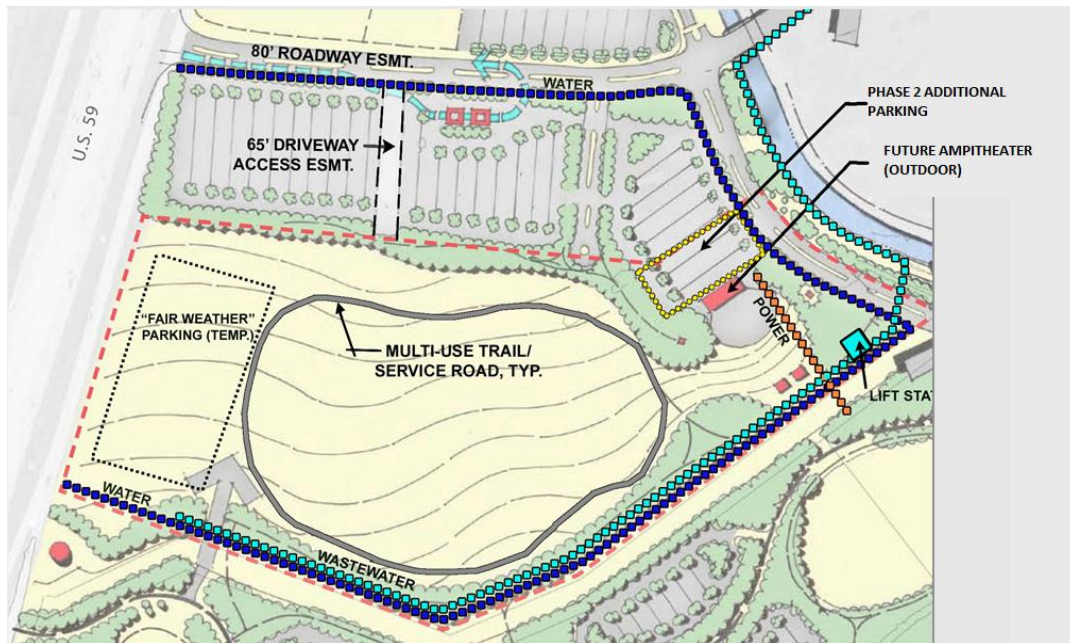
A third park project is the hike and bike trails. The hike and bike trails comply with the City's vision to create a City with superior mobility. The goal of this project is to make Sugar Land a pedestrian-friendly community with multi use trails for bikes and pedestrians. The project would connect neighborhoods and the community through well-designed, well-maintained, multi-use trails. The Parks Recreation and Open Space Master Plan identified developing trails throughout the community as a high priority. This project would provide safe, off-street pedestrian and bicycle

linkages to existing parks and schools as well as various economic, municipal, and recreational

destinations. Currently, there are several trails in Sugar Land; however, there is no continuous trail as many links are missing. Additional citizen input conveyed the importance of connectivity between trails, safe crossings across major roads, a variety of surface trials, and the need for restrooms at trail heads. The total cost of the Hike and Bike Trails is \$9,213,765. Of this amount, over \$5 million will be used on the proposed Ditch H trail. The Ditch H trail is the critical north to south spine of the trail system. It extends from Imperial Park and the proposed Imperial Connector Trail near 90A to the existing First Colony Trails and University Blvd and Brazos River Park Trails. It has two significant crossings underneath Highway 6 and Highway 59, creating an uninterrupted five-mile trail. The Ditch H trail would have two pedestrian bridges to cross Ditch H and the Outfall Ditch behind Clements High School and will connect the existing First Colony Trails across Sweetwater. It is recommended that \$1.4 million will be used to connect trails in the First Colony area. A majority of these trails follow drainage ditches in the First Colony Area. This project includes bridges to make connections to existing trails in First Colony. The third trail project is the Imperial Connector trail that will connect the existing 90A trail, the existing LakePointe trail, and the proposed Ditch H trail. Crosswalk signage and striping will be installed at Brooks and Azalea to allow for better pedestrian visibility. These trails would create a safer community by providing a safe place for walkers and bikers.



Project 4: Festival Site



The final proposed project is the creation of a festival ground near Highway 59 and University Blvd behind the University of Houston-Sugar Land. The goal is to develop the space to use the 52 acres for a variety of programmable events. This project would support the City's 2025 vision as it would provide the opportunity for artistic growth and cultural activity in urban parks, including large-scale performance art festivals. The creation of this project would enhance community pride, provide affordable entertainment alternatives for families, and enhance economic growth in Sugar Land. The festival site would cost \$5,929,200. The 52-acre site would include a service road that could also be used as a trail when the festival grounds are not hosting an event. The ground would be leveled, landscaped, and would be built in a way to provide maximum flexibility for the site. There would also be permanent parking and roadway access to the Highway 59 frontage.



Summary

A recommendation has been presented to the Council on the proposed parks projects for the design of construction of four new facilities in an amount not to exceed \$50 million. The Citizens' Bond Committee worked hard to create four park projects that will create opportunities for families and neighbors to connect in new and unexpected ways. The projects also make an investment in Sugar Land that will improve the quality of life and make our city an even more attractive destination for residents, businesses and visitors.

Should additional funding become available, a list of priorities for each of the projects has been prepared for future consideration and is contained as Appendix A. Within the budget, \$4,672,715 million has been reserved for bond issuance and escalation for inflation over a period of five to seven years until all projects are complete.

Appendix A

Bond Package Alternatives

Community Sports Park	
Synthetic Turf on Multi-Use Fields	1,100,000
East Parking Lot Slip Road	130,000
Site Furniture & Entry Features	140,000
Sports Field Pavilion	188,000
4 Additional Tennis Courts	400,000
Basketball Court	30,000
Gaga Court	7,000
Spray Ground	300,000
Subtotal	2,295,000
Contingency (10%)	229,500
Design (10%)	229,500
Total Alternatives	2,754,000
Festival Site	
Turf Upgrade	500,000
Subtotal	500,000
Contingency (10%)	50,000
Design (10%)	50,000
Total Alternatives	600,000
Brazos River Park	
North Lake & Loop Trails	900,000
Pedestrian Bridge	250,000
Shelters	300,000
Bridge Upgrade (concrete) between SLMP & BRP Ph II	400,000
Subtotal	1,850,000
Contingency (10%)	185,000
Design (3%)	55,500
Total Alternatives	2,090,500
Hike & Bike	
First Colony Trail Section (Ditch outfall to Williams Trac	259,500
First Colony Trail Section (Austin Pkwy to FC Pool)	200,000
Bridge B	550,000
Trailheads	45,000
Subtotal	1,054,500
Contingency (10%)	105,450
Admin/Materials Testing (3%)	31,635
Total Alternatives	1,191,585
Ditch H Trail - Lexington to Commonwealth	730,000
Subtotal	730,000
Contingency (10%)	73,000
Design (10%)	73,000
Total Alternatives	876,000
First Colony Trail (Hwy 6 to Austin Pkwy)	530,000
Subtotal	530,000
Contingency (10%)	53,000
Design/Admin/Materials Testing (3%)	15,900
Total Alternatives	598,900
Hike & Bike Total Options	2,666,485